

WYCOMBE TOP-OF-THE-TABLE LOSE AT HOME

Sports Mail Special Report

WITH both sides in the fight for the Isthmian League championship, the match at High Wycombe between Wycombe Wanderers and Tooting and Mitcham this afternoon produced a fast, exciting and closely-fought tussle. Tooting and Mitcham eventually ran out winners by 2-1.

Wycombe Wanderers: K Brown, J Beck, J Moring, D Thomas, J Bartholomew, J Truett, L Worley, C Trott, P Bates, R Fryer, G Free.

Tooting and Mitcham: W Pearson, J Harlow, G Edwards, G Holden, D Kay, A Slade, A Grainger, D Roberts, P Hasty, A Viney, D Flanagan.

Referee: R Pearce (Canning Town).

When the speedy Tooting front line swept into action, Brown was soon busy in the home goal, and one long-range drive by right half Holden went just wide.

But the Wycombe backs covered so well that it was ten minutes before the visitors' in-

ternational leader, Paddy Hasty, touched the ball. When he did manage to get it he slipped through a pass which Roberts skied in the goalmouth.

A few seconds later, Viney slung in a high-speed shot which went inches wide, with Brown out of position.

LUCKY TO ESCAPE

Tooting were lucky to escape when Kay blocked shots from Bates and Fryer in quick succession. Brown made a good save when Hasty smashed in a left-foot shot which brought the goalkeeper to his knees.

As play swung to the other end Fryer missed an excellent chance for Wycombe when he sliced his shot with only the goalkeeper to beat.

A few minutes before half-time the Wycombe right back, Beck, hit the home crossbar attempting to clear, and when the ball rebounded left winger FLANAGAN seized on it promptly to put Tooting ahead with a powerful shot.

When Wycombe hit back Trott hit the crossbar, and a shot from Bates was brilliantly saved by Pearson just before half-time.

Half-time: Wycombe Wanderers 0, Tooting 1.

The second half brought early thrills as Tooting attacked with renewed zest and three minutes after the resumption the ever dangerous HASTY increased their lead when he headed in from a centre by Granger.

When Wycombe retaliated Harlow blocked a hot shot from Trott on the goal-line with the goalkeeper out of position. The referee judged him to have handled the ball and Wycombe were awarded a penalty. Goalkeeper Pearson, however, made a brilliant save from Bates's spot kick.

The Wanderers were eventually rewarded half an hour after the interval when Bates, taking a neat pass from FRYER, electrified the crowd with a spectacular 25 yard drive which beat Pearson all the way. Over-eagerness marred Wycombe's moves in front of goal as they pressed hotly for an equaliser.

RESULT

WYCOMBE WANDERERS 1
TOOTING 2

WYCOMBE ARE ECLIPSED

Wycombe 1 Tooting 2

TOOTING and Mitcham moved back into the Isthmian League championship race by defeating the leaders, Wycombe Wanderers, in a match as exacting as any Cup-tie.

Until desperation spurred a revival late in the game, Wycombe's off-form forwards were eclipsed by the hard-working Tooting halves. And Tooting always looked more dangerous in front of goal.

International Paddy Hasty was too elusive for Wycombe's new centre half Johnny Bartholomew.

Another Wycombe newcomer, 18-year-old right half Dave Thomas, had a tough time, but did well against some sparkling combination.

Tooting, quicker on the ball, kept the initiative in the first half, but the home backs held them until just before the interval when Flanagan scored from the rebound after right-back Beck had hit the bar in an attempt to clear.

With Wycombe still unable to combine effectively in attack, Hasty increased Tooting's lead in the first five minutes of the second half.

Wycombe's revival came after Pearson had saved a penalty from Bates.

For 20 minutes a revitalised home forward line kept play largely in the visitors' half, with Pearson under constant assault until he was beaten in the 75th minute by a spectacular 25-yard drive by Bates.